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TO USMISSION OECD PARIS PRIORITY

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TAGS: SENV, OECD

SUBJECT: OECD URBAN ENVIRONMENT SECTOR GROUP: US COMMENTS
ON REVISED FINAL DRAFT OF LOW-COST IMPROVEMENTS REPORT

REF: STATE 126680

HUD REQUESTS FOLLOWING COMMENTS ON THE ABOVE REPORT TO BE
PASSED TO KUHNEMANN AT OECD ENVIRONMENT DIRECTORATE AS SOON
AS POSSIBLE:

1. US BELIEVES THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE LOW-COST IMPROVE-
MENTS REPORT AS AN OECD SUBMISSION TO HABITAT IS MATERIALLY
IMPROVED BY FINAL REVISED DRAFT'S MORE POSITIVE TONE. HOW-
EVER, FINAL DRAFT IS STILL VULNERABLE TO SAME CRITICISMS
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MADE OF PREVIOUS DRAFT (SEE REFTEL).

2. US IS PARTICULARLY CONCERNED BY THE LACK OF BALANCE IN
TREATMENT OF SUGGESTED IMPROVEMENTS AND BY THE DRAFT'S

FAILURE TO REFLECT INTERNATIONAL AGREEMENT--AMONG URBAN PLANNERS AS WELL AS AT HABITAT'S PARENT, THE STOCKHOLM CONFERENCE--THAT EFFORTS TO IMPROVE ENVIRONMENT MUST BE PART OF A COMPREHENSIVE PROGRAM IF EFFORTS ARE NOT TO HAVE UNSOUGHT CONSEQUENCES. FOR EXAMPLE, CLOSING NARROW CITY STREETS FOR CHILDREN'S PLAY (PARA. 61) AND PROVIDING STANDS FOR BAND

MUSIC IN SMALL CITY SQUARES (PARA. 71) CREATES NOISE POLLUTION FOR THEIR RESIDENTS UNLESS SOMETHING IS FIRST DONE TO PREVENT OR MINIMIZE SUCH NOISE. DEMOLISHING OBSOLETE BUILDINGS TO PERMIT CARS TO BE PARKED BEHIND CITY HOUSES MAY GET CARS OFF THE STREET (PARA. 49) BUT IT ALSO SPREADS AIR AND NOISE POLLUTION TO AREAS USUALLY RESERVED FOR CHILDREN'S PLAY AND ADULT RECREATION. FURTHERMORE, OVERCROWDING AND UNHEALTHY HOUSING ARE NOT MORE PRESSING PROBLEMS THAN ENVIRONMENTAL DEFECTS; THEY ARE ENVIRONMENTAL DEFECTS.

3. US BELIEVES THAT PROBLEM-ORIENTED APPROACH IS USEFUL, PARTICULARLY WHEN RESOURCES ARE LIMITED, BUT IT IS USEFUL ONLY WHEN THIS APPROACH IS TAKEN WITHIN CONTEXT OF AN OVERALL CITY PLAN, AND IT IS A REGRESSION RATHER THAN AN ADVANCE, AS THE ABOVE INDICATES, TO VIEW IT AS AN IMPORTANT DEVELOPMENT IN URBAN MANAGEMENT (PARA. 34).

4. US FINDS THE ENDING OF THE THIRD SENTENCE IN PARA. 21 TO BE RATHER WEAK AND SUGGESTS THE WORDS "BETTER LOOKING" BE REPLACED BY "VISUALLY MORE ATTRACTIVE" AND THAT THE REST OF THE PARAGRAPH READ AS FOLLOWS: "BY STIMULATING NEIGHBORHOOD CONCERN OVER THE APPEARANCE AND CARE OF AN AREA, THEY ALSO LEAD TO A REDUCTION OF PETTY CRIME AND VANDALISM AND THUS TO A HEALTHIER AND MORE VIABLE URBAN ENVIRONMENT. IN OTHER WORDS, LOW-COST OUTDOOR IMPROVEMENTS WHEN UNDERTAKEN AS PART OF A COMPREHENSIVE PLAN TO IMPROVE THE URBAN ENVIRONMENT CAN SIGNIFICANTLY RAISE THE QUALITY OF LIFE IN TOWNS AND CITIES."

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5. US BELIEVES THAT THE SECTION ON ADULT RECREATION SHOULD BE EXPANDED AND SUGGESTS THAT CONSIDERATION BE GIVEN TO INSERTING A FEW SENTENCES ON CONVERTING SECTIONS OF VACANT PLOTS, PARKS OR PLAYGROUNDS INTO GAMES COURTS. CONSIDERATION ALSO SHOULD BE GIVEN TO REMOVING REFERENCES TO INDOOR FACILITIES (PARA. 71) AS NOT PERTINENT; AND TO MERGING THIS PARAGRAPH WITH THE SECTION ON ADULT RECREATION.

6. ALSO, THE EXAMPLE GIVEN OF DERELICT LAND (PARA. 73) IS INAPPROPRIATE. IT ALSO HAS BEEN US EXPERIENCE THAT RAILINGS AND WALLS DO NOT ELIMINATE VANDALISM AND RUBBISH TIPPING UNLESS THEY ARE TOO HIGH TO CLIMB. WHAT IS NEEDED HERE IS SOCIAL EFFORT TO ORGANIZE THE RESIDENTS OF SUCH

FLATS TO CARE FOR THE AREA AND TO USE IT FOR GARDENS OR RECREATIONAL PURPOSES.

7. IN REGARD TO PARA. 80, US SUGGESTS THAT THE FOLLOWING BE INSERTED IN THE LAST SENTENCE AFTER "TRAFFIC":
"ABSORB NOISE AND AIR POLLUTION." ALSO SUGGEST THAT

CONSIDERATION BE GIVEN TO INSERTING THE FOLLOWING AT THE END OF THE PARAGRAPH: "THE PLANTING OF DIFFERENT VARIETIES OF TREES CAN HELP TO GIVE INDIVIDUALITY TO STREETS AND TO MINIMIZE ENVIRONMENTAL PROBLEMS RESULTING FROM MONO-CULTURE."

8. US BELIEVES PAPER WOULD BENEFIT IF PARA. 89 WERE MOVED TO THE SECTION ON CONCLUSIONS. ALSO IT SHOULD BE POINTED OUT THAT DOUBTS ABOUT LARGE-SCALE RENEWAL "BEGAN TO EMERGE" A DECADE EARLIER THAN STATED IN PARA. 3.

9. US HOPES ITS COMMENTS HAVE BEEN USEFUL IN STIMULATING RECOGNITION OF THE IMPORTANCE OF SETTING LOW-COST IMPROVEMENTS WITHIN THE CONTEXT OF COMPREHENSIVE URBAN PLANNING. HOPES ALSO THAT DRAFTING GROUP WILL GIVE SERIOUS THOUGHT TO A FINAL EDITING WHICH WILL REMOVE REPETITION WHICH AT PRESENT REDUCES IMPACT OF DRAFT UPON THE READER. FURTHERMORE, SUGGEST THAT, IF POSSIBLE, RENEWED CONSIDERATION BE GIVEN TO INCREASING CONSTRUCTIVENESS AND EFFECT OF REPORT BY INCLUDING STRATEGIES FOR COMPREHENSIVE LOW-COST IMPROVEMENT PROGRAMS WHICH CAN BE APPLIED BY LOCAL OFFICIALS. INGERSOLL
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